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EDITORS' TABLE.

EDITORS: E. D. COPE AND J. S. KINGSLEY.

THE judicial attitude in all things is, in the present stage of human development, a far from common accomplishment. Philosophy, however, requires it, and scientific men should be, if possible, philosophers. But it is precisely this class whose philosophy is most frequently put to the test by their fellow-men. To a majority of the human race the intellectual life is a shadow not worth pursuing, and those who pursue it are correspondingly disesteemed by them. The defect of the intellectual type of mentality in a community is a stage of development which is the parent of better things or worse things. From it may arise a society of philosophers, or of religious devotees, or of Helio-gabali and Vitellii. That the type of face that characterized the last of the imperial family of Rome is appearing in our streets is quite evident, and it will require the exertions of the devotional and intellectual classes to prevent it from becoming still more common. That Brother Jonathan should come to resemble a Nero would be an unexpected metamorphosis; yet signs are not wanting that such a degenerative process is not impossible. The unintellectual materialism which characterizes the majority of the wealthy classes of Americans will be watched with serious curiosity. Some of the wealthy will direct their stored energy to the improvement of their race; others will expend it in degenerative processes. Which type will prevail?

The excellent services of the religious world in directing human activity away from destructive channels should be perceived and sustained by the scientific community. Nevertheless, it cannot but be lamented that the work of the churches is often more profitably directed to instructing the people as to what they should *not* do, and not sufficiently clearly as to what they *should* do. It is in the latter direction that weakness is often apparent. Nevertheless, the influence of the churches in this direction also is of incalculable benefit.

It rests with the scientific world to bring out the facts of the universe, or, in other words, the truth. And knowledge of the truth is the only safe guide as to what men shall do and what they shall not do. But this service does not furnish energy.

It offers only light. Light may be refulgent, and men may "love darkness rather than light." So the office of supplying to men the energy to act will never be an unimportant one. But let that energy be applied in the direction of light, and not in any other way. It is the disposition to set ancient dogma over modern light that furnishes the *raison d'être* of the odium antitheologicum. The enlightened mind revolts against this tyranny over intelligence, and excuses for its authors are not always at hand. Let science, however, avoid bigotry on her side, and she will gain by the contrast. She can afford to be judicial, remembering that the earlier stages of human as of lower evolution are all about us, and that they furnish plastic material ready to her hand.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Strasburger and Hillhouse's Practical Botany.¹—Some time ago we noticed briefly the original German edition of this book, which appeared under the name "Das Kleine Botanische Practicum." We now repeat our conviction of its great value to the beginner, and trust that it will be widely used in this country. The additions made by the author and English editor have added greatly to its usefulness.

Throughout the work much attention is given to the instruments and apparatus used in investigation, the work differing in this respect from any others of its kind. The authors do not think it trifling to give particular directions as to the cleaning of cover-glasses, the placing of a drop of water upon the slide, etc. A dozen pages are devoted to instruments, reagents, etc., and then the student "learns to do by doing." Studies of starch, aleurone, protoplasm, chromatophores, tissues, bundles, etc., follow one another in succession, the student being thus led over the field of general histology, after which he takes up in order the study of selected examples of the lower plants, the Bacteria, Algæ, Fungi, Lichens, Mosses, Liverworts, Vascular Cryptogams, finally reaching the Gymnosperms and Angiosperms.

A valuable feature of this edition consists of the lists of "ma-

¹ "Handbook of Practical Botany," for the botanical laboratory and private student, by E. Strasburger, Professor of Botany in the University of Bonn, author of "Zellbildung und Zelltheilung," etc. Edited from the German by W. Hillhouse, M.A., F.L.S., Professor of Botany and Vegetable Physiology Mason Science College, Birmingham, formerly scholar of Trinity College, and Lecturer in the University of Cambridge. Revised by the author, and with many notes by author and editor. With one hundred and sixteen original and eighteen additional illustrations. London: Swan, Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co., Paternoster Square, 1887.